



Samantha J. Kerkman

State Representative • Serving the 61st Assembly District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 13, 2013

CONTACT: State Representative Samantha J. Kerkman

608-266-2530

Joint Legislative Council Advances Child Welfare Legislation

Madison –Today, the Joint Legislative Council (JLC) voted to advance all three pieces of legislation developed by the Special Committee on Permanency for Young Children in the Child Welfare System. State Representative Samantha Kerkman (R-Randall), chair of the Special Committee, testified before the JLC in favor of the bills. The members of the JLC recommended the bills for introduction. They will go to the Assembly first for consideration in standing committee.

The Special Committee was created by the JLC to study current law relating to permanency for children in the child welfare system under the age of eight and to make policy recommendations. The Committee's goal was to recommend policy changes that would help achieve permanency for children more quickly and efficiently. The Committee was made up of both legislators and public members with diverse backgrounds and experience with the child welfare system. Members were chosen by the JLC.

Over the course of six meetings, the members of the Committee heard testimony from a wide variety of different stakeholders about how to improve the child welfare system by getting children to permanency in an efficient and fair way. After considering all information through Committee discussion, sixteen bill drafts were prepared and presented at the final meeting for consideration. Those bills passed favorably out of the Special Committee after being combined into three final bill drafts.

"After an extended discussion, I'm pleased that these bills were approved for introduction by the members of the Joint Legislative Council," said Rep. Kerkman. "There is still more work to be done as these bills make their way through the legislative process. But I hope we will find a consensus and pass this legislation to help our children achieve permanency."

Video recordings of JLC and Special Committee meetings may be viewed online at wiseeye.org. Committee bills and materials are posted at:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/committees/study/2012/WELFR/index.html>

###